

September 26, 2008

Shabbat Shalom!

“Standing together” is a goal for any community. Moving forward often requires us to transform division into unity, disagreement into cooperation and compromise, diverse opinions into shared understandings. At least, on some levels, members of a family, group or nation are responsible for each other’s welfare and quality of life.

The Torah reading for this week in Deuteronomy begins with a vision of the Israelites standing together before Moses to accept their covenant as a community of faith. Chapter 29 starts with this declaration: “You stand, this day, all of you, before the Eternal, your God – you tribal heads, you elders, and you officials, all the men of Israel, you children, you women, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to waterdrawer – to enter into the covenant of the Eternal your God.” Everyone present was involved in making a communal choice to follow a set of commandments and values. All of those people mentioned fulfilled, collectively, roles of leadership, security, education, nurturing souls, and providing shelter and sustenance. It took all of these groups within the people of Israel to create a strong community.

As we watch delicate – and seemingly heated – negotiations taking place among our national leaders, let us hope that they will continue to consider the needs of all people – of all ages and all walks of life – in solutions that can chart a better course for the future. Their task is not only to come to an agreement, but also to lead us all in standing together with a sense of confidence and hope.

And may we, within our community, stand together as well, poised to make the coming New Year one of fulfillment, contentment and blessing.

**-- L'shalom,
Rabbi Larry K.**